

What OA offers

- **Acceptance** of ourselves as we are now, as we were, and as who we may become.
- **Understanding** of the problems we face now and almost certainly share with others in the group.
- **Communication** as a natural result of shared experience. Because we identify with one another and understand and accept each other, we communicate from the heart.
- **Recovery** from our illness and help toward a new self-acceptance and self-understanding.
- **Power** through acceptance and understanding of oneself, practice of our Twelve-Step recovery program, belief in a power greater than oneself, and the support and companionship of the group. These are the means through which a door is opened to a new way of life.

OA Publications

The following items are particularly helpful to newcomers. These and other OA publications are available from the World Service Office.

About OA

Is Food a Problem for You?

OA Members Come in All Sizes

A Commitment to Abstinence

A Plan of Eating

*Before You Take that First Compulsive Bite,
Remember . . .*

Dignity of Choice

Many Symptoms, One Solution

Membership Survey Report

Questions and Answers

To the Family of the Compulsive Eater

To the Newcomer

To the Teen

*To the Man Who Wants to Stop Compulsive
Overeating, Welcome*

Lifeline, OA's magazine of recovery (by subscription)

Please let us know how we can better inform you about OA's Twelve-Step program. When contacting the OA World Service Office, please ask about OA's professional kit; *Lifeline*, OA's international magazine; the *Courier*, a publication for professionals; and OA speakers. We look forward to hearing from you.

How to find OA

Visit the OA Web site at www.oa.org, or contact the World Service Office at 505-891-2664. Many local telephone directories also include listings for Overeaters Anonymous.

Overeaters Anonymous®

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INTRODUCING OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Introducing OA to Health Care Professionals

*Do you have patients whose
weight, body image, food
attitudes or behaviors cause
health problems?*



Overeaters Anonymous does not concern itself with the medical aspects of obesity, anorexia, or bulimia, but rather with the compulsive nature of overeating and other eating disorders. OA believes that **compulsive eating** is a threefold disease: physical, emotional and spiritual, which, like alcoholism and drug abuse, can be arrested, but not cured. The OA approach to this problem is a resource which can enhance—not replace—your existing treatment programs for these patients.

What is OA?

Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who have a common problem: compulsive eating. We join together to share experience, strength and hope with one another to solve this problem and to help other compulsive overeaters do the same. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for OA membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. Our goal is to abstain from compulsive eating one day at a time. We do this through regular contact with other OA members, attending OA meetings, and by following the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.

How do members achieve and maintain a healthy weight?

Overeaters Anonymous is a proven program patterned after the Twelve-Step principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. Many people have reached a healthy weight and maintained it by following this program of recovery. Because of our long experience of compulsive eating and recovery from compulsive eating, we are able to offer understanding and support for the com-

pulsive eater and general guidance in developing a personal plan of eating (for more information, see the pamphlets *A Plan of Eating* and *Dignity of Choice*). OA claims no nutritional expertise. We strongly recommend that members seek the advice of medical and nutritional professionals for guidance and for approval of a plan of eating.

As a health care professional, you may also have clients or patients who are maintaining a health body weight, but they may still have issues around overeating, bingeing, grazing, bulimia or anorexia. Overeaters Anonymous offers hope and recovery to these individuals as well.

Is OA a religious organization?

Overeaters Anonymous has no religious requirement, affiliation or orientation. The Twelve-Step program of recovery is considered “spiritual” because it deals with inner change. OA has members of many different religious beliefs as well as atheists and agnostics. Everyone is welcome.

Why is OA “anonymous”?

Anonymity allows OA to govern itself through principles rather than personalities. Position or status has no relevance in OA; we are all compulsive overeaters. Anonymity at the level of press, radio, television and other public/social media of communication provides assurance that OA membership will not be disclosed. Anonymity also allows each member the freedom and safety to develop personal honesty, accountability and responsibility about his or her actions and choices.

The following series of questions may help your clients and patients determine if they are compulsive eaters.

1. Do I eat when I'm not hungry, or not eat when my body needs nourishment?
2. Do I go on eating binges for no apparent reason, sometimes eating until I'm stuffed or even feel sick?
3. Do I have feelings of guilt, shame or embarrassment about my weight or the way I eat?
4. Do I eat sensibly in front of others and then make up for it when I am alone?
5. Is my eating affecting my health or the way I live my life?
6. When my emotions are intense—whether positive or negative—do I find myself reaching for food?
7. Do my eating behaviors make me or others unhappy?
8. Have I ever used laxatives, vomiting, diuretics, excessive exercise, diet pills, shots or other medical interventions (including surgery) to try to control my weight?
9. Do I fast or severely restrict my food intake to control my weight?
10. Do I fantasize about how much better life would be if I were a different size or weight?
11. Do I need to chew or have something in my mouth all the time: food, gum, mints, candies or beverages?
12. Have I ever eaten food that is burned, frozen or spoiled; from containers in the grocery store; or out of the garbage?
13. Are there certain foods I can't stop eating after having the first bite?
14. Have I lost weight with a diet or “period of control” only to be followed by bouts of uncontrolled eating and/or weight gain?
15. Do I spend too much time thinking about food, arguing with myself about whether or what to eat, planning the next diet or exercise cure, or counting calories?